NUMB. XXV.

THE PLAIN DEALER.

——— Uterne
Ad Caſus dubios fidet ſibi certius ; hic, qui
Pluribus Aſſuerit mentem, corpuſque ſuperbum :
An qui contentus parvo, metuenſque futuri,
In pace, ut ſapiens, ap erit idonea bello ?. ——— HOR.

MONDAY, JUNE 15. 1724.

WITH the Leave of the *Grammarians*, I ſhall venture to put one of their *Moods* a little upon the Rack ; while I affirm, in a kind of Riddle, for the Uſe, and Pleaſure, of my Reader. — That, tho' Every Body *may* be Happy, yet ſcarce Any Body *can* be ſo.

THERE is no Definite Point, that we can fix at, when we wou'd deſcribe *what Happineſs is* ; yet the Road, to this great Journey's End of all Men's Hopes, is very Short, and Obvious. One wou'd wonder, therefore, how it comes to be ſo univerſally miſtaken, if it were not eaſily obſerv'd, That moſt Men are under an Error, even as to the very Placing it. — *Happineſs* is ſeated, not in *Power*, but in *Will*. — Though very Few can be *Fortunate*, yet All Men may be *Satisfy'd* : And They, who leſſen their Deſires, have, in one great Point, the Advantage, over thoſe who enlarge their Proſperity ; for, allowing both Parties to be equally Happy, yet the Firſt, at leaſt, are Happy, with leſs Danger, and Incumbrance.

WHOEVER can be ſo wiſe, as to content himſelf with his preſent Lot, while he, patiently, hopes a better, will eſcape the common Fate, of taſting, with Diſrelish, and Averſion, what he finds within his Reach ; from a reſtleſs and devouring Thirſt, after what is Future, and Uncertain. — Life ſlides from the Impatient, like the Motion of a murmuring Brook ; where the Current waſtes much faſter, than if the Surface had been ſmooth, and ſilent. — When we are upon the Brink of the Grave, we ſtart, — and wonder at our Situation ! And, then, firſt, begin to look back, with Shame, and Sorrow, at the too Little we have *Done*, in Life ; and the too much, we have *Wiſh'd*, in it.

Oh, greatly bleſs'd ! who can, as Fate requires,
By ductile Wiſdom, temper your Deſires !
Balanc'd, within, *you look abroad, ſerene :*
And, marking both Extreams, paſs, clear, between.
Oh ! cou'd your lov'd Example teach your Skill,
And, as it moves my Wonder, mend my Will :
Calm wou'd my Paſſions grow ; my Lot might pleaſe ;
And my ſick Soul ſhou'd think *it ſelf, to Eaſe.*
But, to the Future, while I raiſe my Eye,
Each preſent Good ſlips, undiſtinguiſh'd, by.
Still, what I wou'd, *contends with what* I can ;
And my wild Wiſhes leap the Bounds of Man.

SO complain'd a Friend of mine, to a Gentleman, wiſer than himſelf, by as much as his Deſires were more moderate. — It was in a Poem, which he call'd his *Choice* : But his Mind was ſo diſcompos'd, by a Tempeſt of ungovern'd Wiſhes, that he ſcarce knew what to choſe, even when his *Choice* was the Subject *choſen!*

If in my Power it lies, to limit Hope,
And my unchain'd Deſires can fix a Scope :
This were my Choice — Oh, Friend ! pronounce me poor ?
For I have Wants, *which Wealth can never cure !*
Mean is that Soul, whom Its own *Good can* fill :
A proſp'rous World, *alone, cou'd feaſt my Will.*
He's poor, *at beſt, who Other's Miſ'ry ſees,*
And wants the wiſh'd for Power to give it Eaſe.
He's rich, *who, ſole-ſupreme, and unconfin'd,*
Can, with unbounded Influ'nce, bleſs Mankind.
A Glory this ! unreach'd, but on a Throne !
All *were Enough.* — *But leſs, than* All, *is* None.

This my firſt Wiſh. — But, ſince 'twere wild, and vain,
To graſp at glitt'ring Clouds, with fruitleſs Pain,
More ſafely Low, let my next Proſpect be ;
And Life's mild Evening this fair Sun-ſet ſee.
Far from a Lord's *loath'd Neighbourhood, — A State,*
Whoſe Little *Greatneſs is a Pride I hate !*
On ſome lone Wild, *ſhou'd my ſtrong Houſe be plac'd :*
Surrounded by a vaſt, and healthy, Waſte.
Steril, and coarſe, the untry'd Soil ſhou'd be :
But forc'd to flouriſh ; and ſubdu'd, by me.
Seas, Woods, Meads, Mountains, Gardens, Streams & Skies,
Shou'd, with a changeful Grandeur, charm my Eyes.
Still, where I mov'd, new Marks of my paſt Pains,
Shou'd plume the Mountain Tops, and paint the Plains.
Greatly Obſcure, and ſhunning Courts, *or* Name,
Widely befriended, but eſcaping Fame :
Peaceful, in ſtudious Quiet, wou'd I live ;
Lie hid, for Leiſure ; and grow Rich, to give.

I am ſure, I wiſh no Ill, to the Author of the *Manuſcript*, from which I took theſe Verſes ; becauſe, to ſay Truth, He is the moſt Intimate of all my Acquaintance, — yet, I foreſee an inexhauſtible Proviſion of Diſappointments, in Store, for a Mind, that is ſo unſtable, as to afflict it ſelf with Other's Sorrows, when there are Domeſtick ones, more than enough, in the happieſt Man's Condition, to interweave, and make Checquet-work of, the richeſt Robes of Fortune

I REMEMBER a pleaſant Fancy, in *Plutarch's Feaſt of the Seven Wiſe Men*, concerning the Limits we ſhou'd

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ſhou'd ſet to our Deſires. — " If the Perſon, (ſays the " Speaker) is a Man of Wiſdom and Gravity, he wants " no Rule but his Reaſon, to preſcribe him a proper " Meaſure: But, if a *Fool* were to ask me the Queſtion, " I would tell him this Story. — The Moon, upon a " Time, was very earneſt with her Mother, That ſhe " wou'd make her a new Petticoat, that might ſit hand- " ſomely about her; and be neither too ſhort, nor too " long, for her Body: — But how is that *poſſible*, an- " ſwer'd the Mother, with ſome Emotion, when thou " art always changing Shapes, and never contented with " thy own Figure?

THERE is a reſtleſs and univerſal, Circulation of Diſcontent, in all Degrees, and Conditions; — The Rich Man i[illegible]ſerable, becauſe he has no *Heirs*; and wiſhes himſ[illegible]t ſo bleſs'd, as the poor *Labourer*; who cries out, w[illegible]he trims his Hedges, That he cou'd be happy, and [illegible] comfortably, if he had *no Children*, to provide for. — The Citizen ſighs, with Envy, at the ſmell of a new Hay-cock; and longs to wind himſelf out of Buſineſs, that he may enjoy Life, in the Country! — The Country Gentleman finds his Time the moſt heavy, of all his Cares; and dreams, for ever, of the Delights, which he cou'd paſs it in, at *London*! — The *Great* Man complains, That he is wretched, from too much Notice; and the *Good* Man is really ſo, from too little. — Command is full of Cares; and Dependance pinch'd with Miſeries! Every Body repines, at ſome Deficiency, in his own Fortune; and has ſomething, to wiſh for, from another, who is ſtill leſs ſatisfy'd!

DISTANT Proſpects are moſt pleaſing; but they ſeldom fail to deceive us. The rough Lines, and Ruggedneſſes, which look ſmooth, a great Way off, perplex, and entangle, us, when we find our ſelves among them. — I have often been entertain'd, by an ingenious *Italian* Emblem, where, to Satirize the Levity of this inſatiate Diſpoſition, Boys are painted very buſy, running about, with erected Faces, to purſue, and catch at Bubbles; which are blown down, among them, by a Monkey, with a long Pipe, and a Baſin. — The Boys, who are ſuppos'd to have graſp'd ſome, look, amaz'd, and diſappointed, that they are vaniſh'd, in the catching! And the *Motto*, under-written, is — *He, who reaches me, loſes me.*

PERHAPS, it might deſerve to be remember'd, as a Maxim, That *Nothing ought to afflict us, which it is abſolutely out of our Power to remedy* — If it were as eaſy to regulate our Lives, by this Rule, as it is reaſonable to approve it, much the largeſt Part of our Calamities wou'd, at once be cut off, and effectually prevented, for the future — It is certainly an Ambition, not only *juſt*, but *noble*, to purſue the honeſt Calls, either of Fortune, or of Glory: But, if we cou'd purſue 'em, with ſuch Patience, and Moderation of Deſire, as not to loſe, in the Interim, all Reliſh of our preſent Condition; not to place our Only Happineſs, in attempting to become *More* happy; but content our ſelves with what we are, from the Proſpect of what we hope to be: — All the Bitterneſs of Adverſity wou'd loſe its Taſte, in our Uſe of it; and Proſperity become leſs envied, than Peace of Mind, and Tranquility.

BUT This, however poſſible, to Nature, is impoſſible, to Pride, and Cuſtom. — Things, indifferent, in themſelves, become hateful, or amiable, from their Conſequences. — The Reputation, that follows Wealth, gives the ſharpeſt Pain to Poverty: And a Man who is brave enough to provoke Danger, and Death, ſhall want Courage to bear Contempt, though but an imaginary Evil!

HATEMTAI, ſays the *Arabian* Hiſtory, was the moſt bountiful, of all Mankind; and was flatter'd, by a Train of Followers, with continual Flights of Praiſe, and Congratulations of his Good Fortune. — They were asking him one Day, ' Whether, ever, he had ſeen, or ' heard of, any Man, who had ſo noble a Soul, as *Ha-* ' *temtai*?' — He ſmil'd, and return'd this Anſwer: — " I walk'd out into the Fields, on a certain Time, when, " at a Sacrifice of a Hundred Camels, my Houſe was " fill'd, by my Order, with all the Poor, and the Miſe- " rable, who cou'd be found, in the Space of many " Miles round my Dwelling. — Some of the Lords, in " my Company, diſcern'd, at a little Diſtance, a Man, " who was very buſy, in gathering up a Bundle of dry " Thorns, to ſell, at the next Village. We went to " him, and ask'd, Why he was not among the Number " of his Fellows, who were feaſting at the Houſe of *Ha-* " *temtai*? — *Becauſe*, anſwer'd he, *a Man, who can pro-* " *vide himſelf with Bread, by his own Labour, needs not be* " *oblig'd to* Hatemtai. — This Man, *ſaid he*, had a No- " bler Soul, than *Hatemtai*."

I walk'd, lately, into the City, toward the Cloſe of the Day, and obſerving a Church open, went in, to Evening Prayers. I ſat near a Lady, whoſe fine Face, methought, appear'd like the Seat of a long War, between *Beauty*, and *Affliction*. She ſaw, that I had no Prayer Book, and modeſtly offer'd me her own. I kept it during the Service, and took Pleaſure to charge my Memory with the Eight following Lines, which were written, in a Woman's Hand, on a white Leaf, at the Beginning; and were, I believe, of her own compoſing.

Here, tracing Duty's Path, redeem'd from Care,
I heal my Sorrow, with the Balm of Prayer:
Patience, that arms the Mind, for Every State,
Has taught me, not to feel Affliction's Weight.
They, who can, bravely, bear the Woes of Life,
Steer, ſafe, and ſteady, through a Sea of Strife.
While They, who pine their Hope, to feed their Grief,
Exhauſt in Anguiſh; and reſiſt Relief.

THIS was a fine, and uſeful Leſſon; and not improperly plac'd. But it was Pity that ſhe learnt it not ſoon enough to protect her againſt thoſe Paſſions which had left their Traces, too viſibly, on her Eyes, her Air, and her Complexion.

THE World, upon the whole, may be divided into two Claſſes; — The One ſeldom Find, what they are, always, painfully, Seeking: The Other Find it, eaſily, but are never the more Contented. — Among many Remarkable Proverbs, which are proper to the *Eaſtern* People, They have one, to our preſent Purpoſe. — " *There are only two* " *Things which can fill the Covetous Man's Eye*; — Diſcre- " tion: — Or the Earth that his Corpſe muſt be co- " ver'd with.

AFTER all, that can be ſaid, of *Riches*; or, that is the Conſequence of their Poſſeſſion: — *Content* is the ſureſt Comfort. — It is Luxury, that *creates* Poverty; and They are Rich, who deſire Nothing.

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